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TRAINING, ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT, ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES AND MEDICAL REHABILITATION (TEAM)

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) funds the Training, Economic Empowerment, Assistive Technologies and Medical Rehabilitation (TEAM) project to increase availability and access to programs that help persons with disabilities in conflict-affected countries.

The TEAM project works to improve existing services and promote better quality of life for persons with disabilities, including women and girls, to help them attain and maintain maximum independence and contribute productively to society. The project is currently implemented in four countries: Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) and Ukraine.

IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE

In Lao PDR, the project equips medical and rehabilitation service personnel with the knowledge and skills necessary to better assist persons with disabilities. This enables service providers to more accurately direct the use of assistive technology and train others on how to properly prescribe and fit prosthetic and orthotic devices to improve functionality. Enhanced medical and rehabilitation services reduce the incidence of secondary disabilities or complications among persons with disabilities, and also serve to increase their full participation in family and community life.

PROVIDING GREATER ACCESS TO SERVICES

The project also works with government officials and organizations to more successfully engage persons with disabilities in economic empowerment programs and decrease barriers so that persons with disabilities can join the workforce and become productive members of society. Through a series of grants to disability-focused organizations, the project helps to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to a wider range of support services. The project provides vocational training for women with disabilities, training for medical and rehabilitation staff, wheelchair basketball, inclusive education plans for children with disabilities, psychological support and physical rehabilitation services and surgical/medical treatment. It also provides small business grants to persons with disabilities, job readiness training, job placement, autism spectrum disorder awareness programs and national disability policy and strategy development.

TEAM LAOS IMPACT AND RESULTS AS OF AUGUST 2016

- 1,979 persons with disabilities received health-related rehabilitation services and/or assistive technology, including individuals in remote areas of the country that otherwise would not have been able to access such services.
- 8,875 persons with disabilities and/or their families benefitted from social inclusion and awareness-raising activities, which contribute to greater integration into the community.
- Provided organizational training for 10 local and five international partners, which then shared their knowledge to strengthen 127 indigenous organizations.
- 375 persons with disabilities reported increased financial independence through jobs, financial literacy training and loans, reducing economic vulnerability for themselves and their families.

CONTACTS

USAID RDMA

Tinaflor Chaingam
Athenee Tower, 25th Floor,
63 Wireless Road, Lumpini,
Patumwan, Bangkok, Thailand
Tel: +66-2-257-3000
Fax: +66-2-257-3099
Email: info-rdma@usaid.gov
Email: tchaingam@usaid.gov
<http://www.usaid.gov/asia-regional>

PARTNER CONTACT

Bernard Franck
Technical Director, WEL TEAM Project
P.O. Box 6782, Vientiane, Lao PDR
Tel: +856 21 214 524, 222, 439
Fax: +856 21 217 553
Email: bernard_franck@la.worlded.org
www.worlded.org